

and

THE F. B. I. — SCOTLAND YARD — NORTHWEST MOUNTED — SECRET SERVICE !

MANHUNT

TRADEMARK

No. 5

FEBRUARY 1948

10c





WEB COMIC
UNIVERSE.COM

A **MANHUNT** CHILLER

KNIFE of a THOUSAND CUTS

by Gardner F. Fox

SUDDENLY he saw the glint of moonlight on the knife and knew that the Black Cult was on his trail. Evan Hardin turned, fumbled at his belt for the gun tucked into the broad leather. He had an answer for the Black Cult—in hot lead!

For a single instant, he could see the man molded in moonlight. He was a swart, bronzed man, naked to the waist. A turban, badge of the Cult, was wrapped about his head. He was standing, knife in hand, at the far end of the street. Hardin knew the man was touching the knife, feeling its point sharp and hard; was planning to sink that blade in Hardin's back!

Hardin grinned, swore under his breath. "I'll get him, yet. He doesn't know the city like I do. I'll lead him a pretty chase, just as I led his fellow Cultists in Calcutta. . . ."

Hardin yanked his gun free of his belt, held it poised and ready in his hand. He thought, *Let him come after me now! Just let him.*

He was near the wharves, down here. If he could decoy his man onto one of the long docks, pump him full of lead, weight his body and drop it overboard, he would be forever free of the Black Cult. The salt air was strong in his nostrils as he turned and began to run.

Behind him he could hear the *slap-pat* of naked feet following him. . . .

. . . Just as the naked feet had come after him in Calcutta, the night he lifted the KuFan emeralds from the neck of Ming Tei, priestess of the Cult. He had been to a lawn party given by the town governor, had mingled with

the guests as "that American explorer." Ming Tei had been pretty, had let him tell her stale jokes, had let him feed her poppied wine (into which he had slipped the drug so she would not see). When she reeled and fell into his arms, he was in a corner of the garden: he had placed her gently on the grass, had deftly undone the snap of the priceless emeralds and slipped them into his pocket.

A turbaned guard had seen him, had given chase. Across the cobble-stone streets of the city, Hardin had led the man. When they were in the shadows, Hardin shot him down and left him there in a pool of his own blood.

He had taken the next boat to the States, had sold the emeralds to a collector at a fancy price. He had forgotten all about it until the Cult sent him a message: threatening his life unless the emeralds were returned. . . .

Now, running along the wharf, hearing the hollow wood thud and pound under his feet, he chuckled to himself. He lifted his gun up, snapped off the safety catch.

He turned his head—

That was where Evan Hardin made his mistake, to turn his head. For if he had not turned his head, he would have seen the looped rope-piled up on the wharf—would have seen it and stepped aside to avoid it.

He did not see it. He was looking behind him. His foot hit the rope. He pitched forward, falling.

The gun flew out of his hand. It seemed to hang a moment in midair, then fall faster and faster. Hardin bounced on the wooden wharfing, but he was up and scrambling on hands and knees after the gun.

The revolver hit the edge of the wharf. It bounced. It slid. It went toward the edge—
—and fell over!

Hardin heard the flat splash as it landed in the water of the harbor. He could picture it sinking down and down, past the clutching seaweed, coming to rest on the muddy bottom.

Frightened, Hardin turned his head.

Now he had no weapon! Now the man in the turban held the upper hand. With that knife, he could skewer Hardin in the back before he could get away.

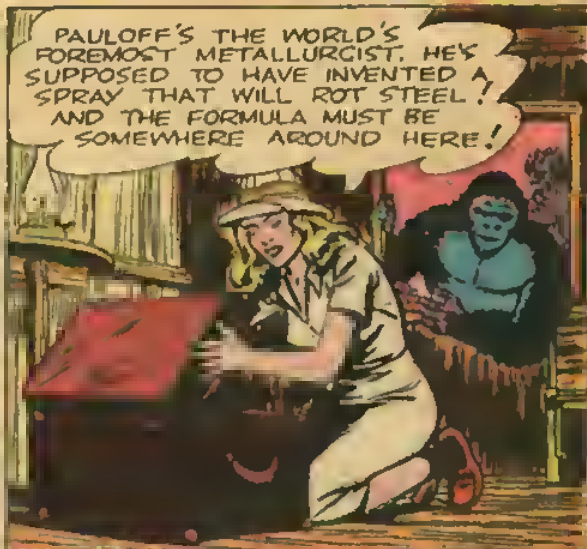
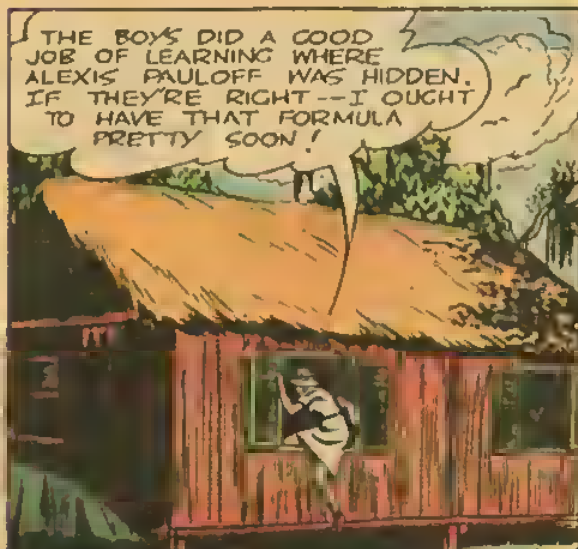
"No . . . no," he whimpered, struggling to his feet. "I can't die out here . . . alone and helpless. . . ."

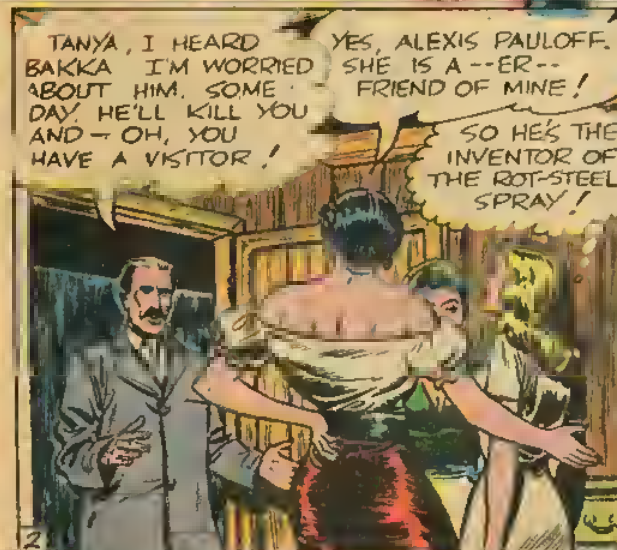
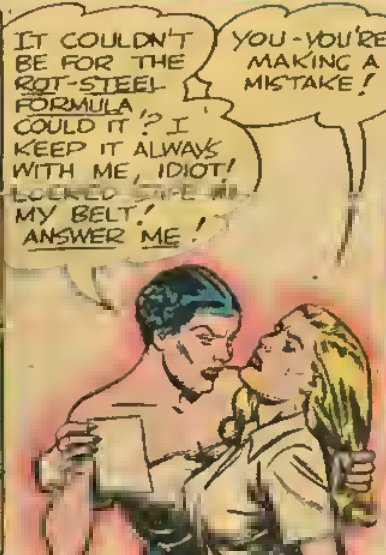
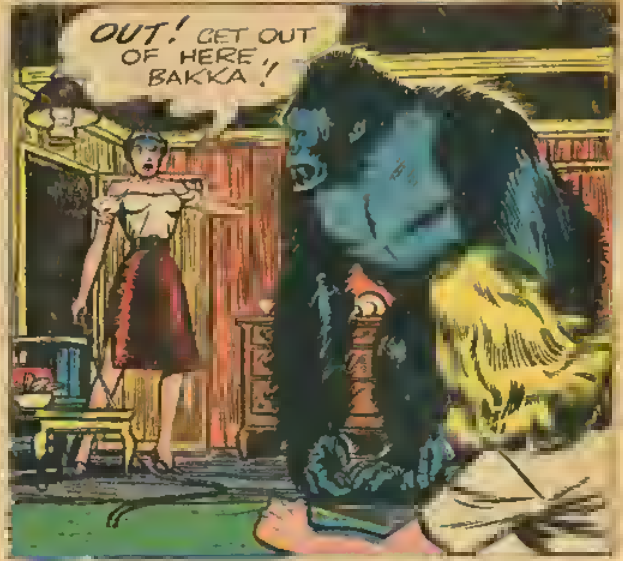
He staggered into the shadows of a big warehouse, stood with his back against the brick wall. His heart thundered and pounded. His hands were clammy with sweat. His head ached. His muscles felt jellyish.

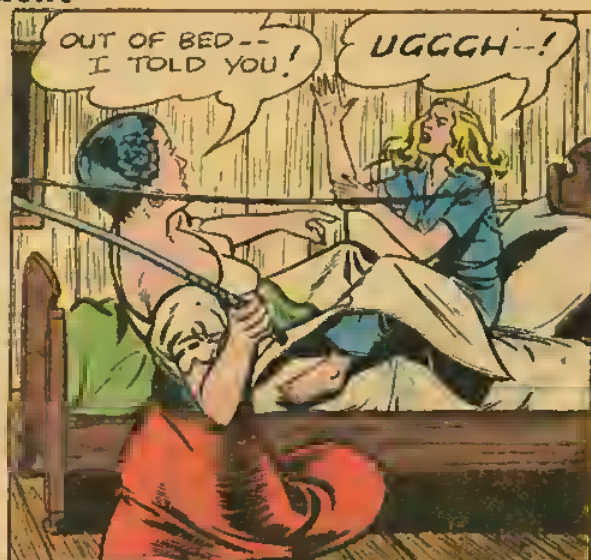
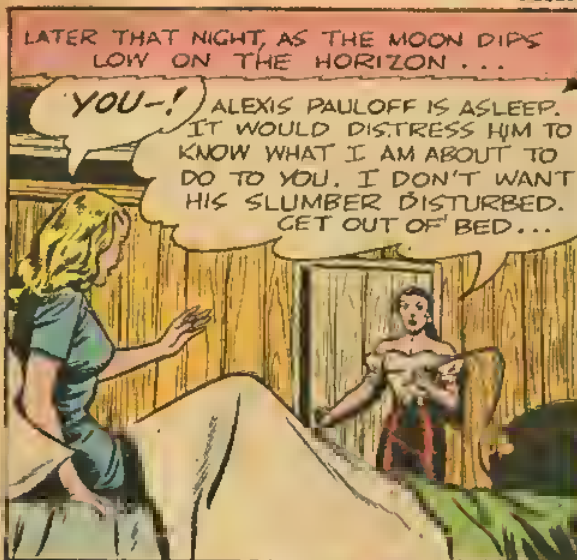
(Continued on inside back cover)

UNDERCOVER GIRL

IN THE HOT AND FETID AFRICAN JUNGLE, THE UNDERBRUSH RUSTLES AS STARR FLAGG CREEPS SILENTLY ON HER MISSION. ABOVE HER THE CRUEL EYES OF A GIANT GORILLA BLINK IN BLOOD-LUST AS THEY FOLLOW HER TRAIL ALONG THE FOREST PATHS AND INTO "JEOPARDY" IN THE JUNGLE







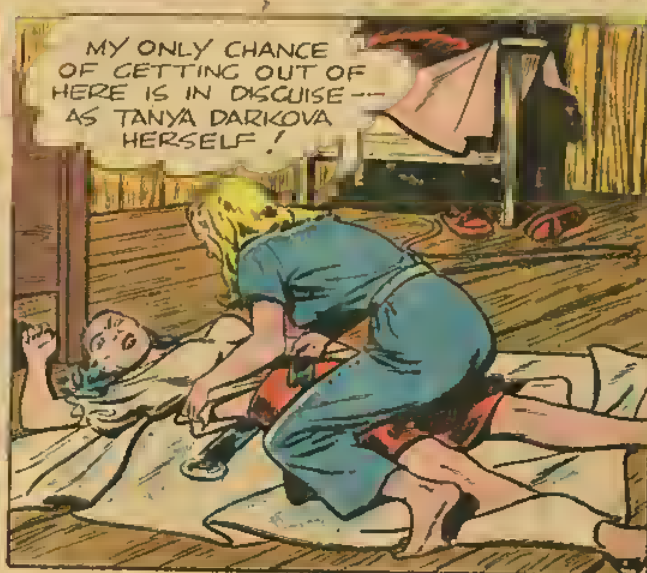
WILD WITH FURY, UNDER-COVER GIRL ATTACKS WITH THRESHING ARMS, LEGS AND BEDCLOTHES...

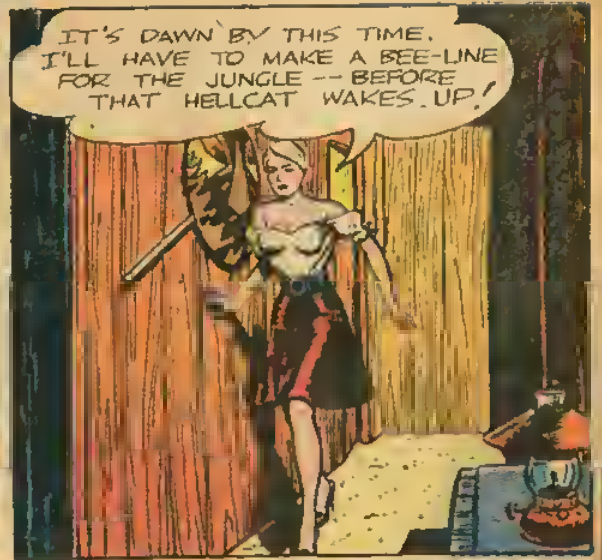
I'LL TEACH YOU-- TO WHIP-- ME!



GOT TO ACT FAST BEFORE PAULOFF -- HEARS -- THE NOISE!

SHE-CAT! I'LL CLAW YOUR PRETTY FACE -- WHEN I -- GET ON MY -- FEET!





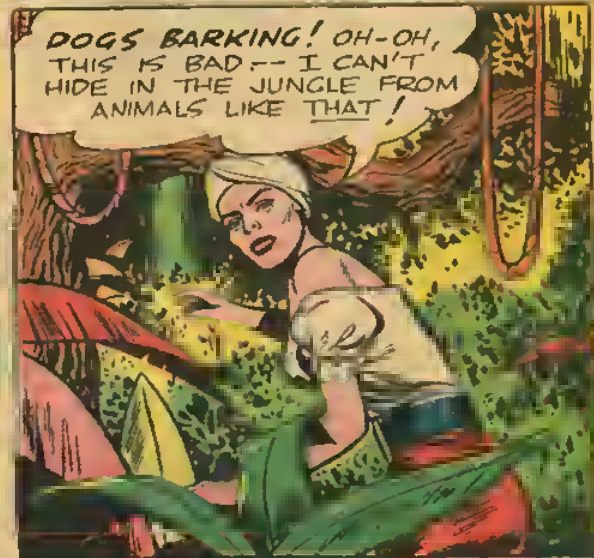
HEART PUMPING, UNDER-COVER GIRL RACES FOR THE SHELTER OF THE TREES. SILENT THROAT RUMBLING, BAKKA THE GORILLA LETS HER PASS . . .



FROM THE WINDOW OF THE BUNGALOW A FINGER TIGHTENS WITH CONTROLLED HATE ON THE TRIGGER OF A MAUSER RIFLE . . .



MISSED! . . . BUT I'LL HUNT HER! IF SHE EVER GETS AWAY FREE.. SHE'LL BRING THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE AFTER ME. SHE KNOWS NOW THAT I HAVE THE ROT-STEEL FORMULA!

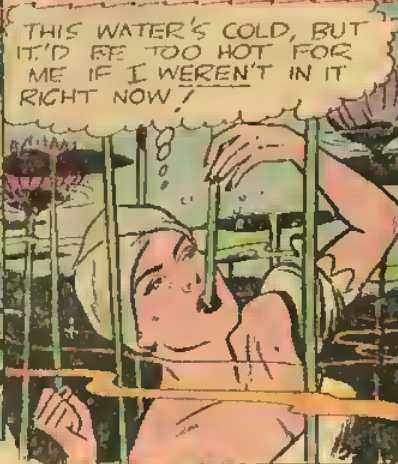


MANHUNT



IF I CAN FOOL THE DOGS BY HIDING IN THE WATER, MAYBE SHE'LL CALL 'EM OFF --

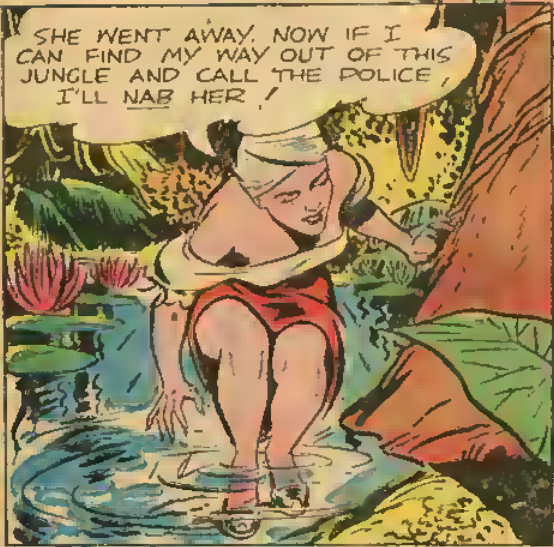
THROUGH THE HOLLOW STEM OF A JUNGLE LILY, STARR FLAGG BREATHE'S IN THE LIFE GIVING AIR...



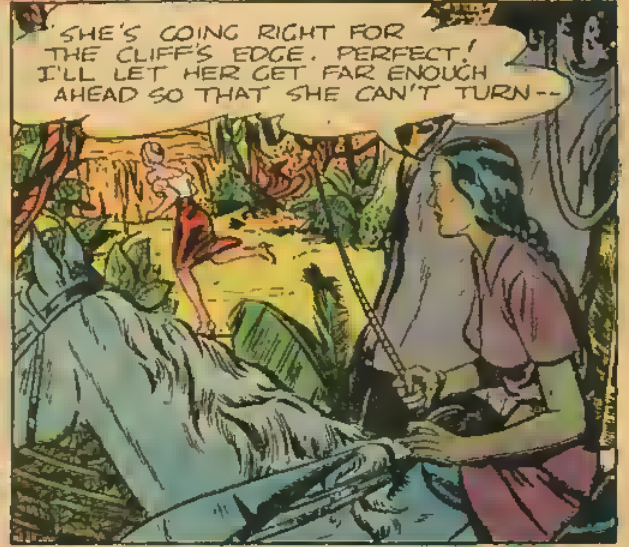
THIS WATER'S COLD, BUT IT'D BE TOO HOT FOR ME IF I WEREN'T IN IT RIGHT NOW!



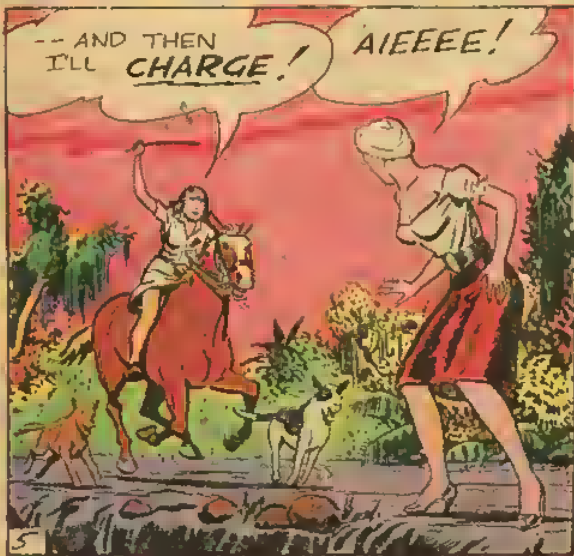
SHE TRICKED ME! BUT, PERHAPS I TOO HAVE TRICKS! I WILL RIDE AWAY AND WAIT!



SHE WENT AWAY. NOW IF I CAN FIND MY WAY OUT OF THIS JUNGLE AND CALL THE POLICE, I'LL NAB HER!



SHE'S GOING RIGHT FOR THE CLIFF'S EDGE. PERFECT! I'LL LET HER GET FAR ENOUGH AHEAD SO THAT SHE CAN'T TURN--



-- AND THEN I'LL CHARGE!

AIEEEE!

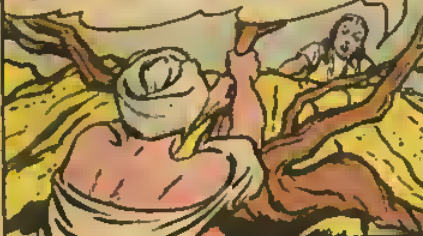


EEEEEEH!

MANHUNT

AS UNDERCOVER GIRL'S BODY HURTTLES DOWNWARD TO BE CRUSHED ON THE ROCKS BELOW, TANYA LAUGHS WITH CRUEL GLEE-- AND THEN STARTS REACHES OUT AND GRIPS A LONE BUSH GROWING ON THE CLIFFSIDE....

HA, HA, HA! CLING TO THE SHRUB--UNTIL YOUR MUSCLES WEAKEN--AND YOU FALL! IT WILL BE SLOWER THAT WAY! BUT JUST AS SURE!



I CAN'T HOLD ON-- ANY LONGER--MY FINGERS ARE SLIPPING--SLIPPING--



HER HANDS SLIP LOOSE, AND STARR FLAGG TAKES THE LONG PLUNGE DOWNWARD...



A SHAGGY BODY HURTTLES ACROSS EMPTY SPACE-- AN ARM SHOOT'S OUT AND GATHERS UNDERCOVER GIRL TO A HAIRY CHEST....

THE GORILLA! HE MUST THINK I'M TANYA DARKOVA!



IF ONLY--HE'D GO AWAY--BEFORE HE--SEES MY FACE!

MRRKK--CRRR--ACGG--



HE'S GONE, THANK HEAVENS! NOW I CAN GET AWAY AND--HEY! IF I FOOLED THE GORILLA--PERHAPS I COULD FOOL PAULOFF TOO--AT LEAST LONG ENOUGH TO GET THAT FORMULA!



MILES AHEAD OF UNDERCOVER GIRL, AT THE JUNGLE BUNGALOW...

THAT'S RIGHT! I SAID I DIDN'T NEED EITHER OF YOU ANY MORE. YOU, PAULOFF, SERVED YOUR PURPOSE BY INVENTING THE METAL-ROT SPRAY. YOU, MARIE--KNOW TOO MUCH!



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THE JUNGLE FASTNESSES RING TO THE REVERBERATION OF TWO SHOTS, THEN FALL STILL AS DEATH ---

GRRRK--AAHRRR--
GRUKICK--



THE AMERICAN SPY IS DEAD, SO IS PAULOFF AND MARIE. THE STEEL-ROT FORMULA IS--ALL MINE! THE SOVIET UNION WILL PAY WELL FOR THIS!



WHAT--?
NOT DEAD!?!

I--
OHH!



GO AHEAD--
SHOOT!

YOU'VE HAD A CHARMED LIFE, BUT IT ENDS WHEN I PULL THIS TRIGGER.!



SUDDENLY, A HAIRY BODY LANDS WITH A THUD ATOP THE SLIM FORM OF TANYA DARKOVA! SHARP FANGS BURY THEMSELVES DEEP IN HER SOFT NECK!

AAAAGGGHH!



BAKKA THOUGHT SHE WAS I! SHE STILL WORE MY CLOTHES--IF I FOOLED HIM--SO DID SHE!



LATER, WITH SLOW STEPS, UNDERCOVER GIRL WALKS FROM THE BUNGALOW OF DEATH, THE ROT-STEEL FORMULA SAFE FOR AMERICAN USE IN TIME OF NEED



Kirk of Scotland Yard



A HUMAN FISH—PLAYED BY A MASTER ANGLER! NOT FOR SPORT, NOT FOR NEED, BUT WITH A GRIM, DEADLY PURPOSE, THE FISHERMAN GAFFS HIS VICTIMS... AS INSPECTOR KIRK PLUNGES INTO THE TROUBLED WATERS, HE BECOMES BAIT HIMSELF, FOR—

**"THE MAN WHO
FISHED FOR MEN!"**

MUSCLES WEARYING, THE SWIMMER SOON FALTERS! HE GULPS WATER! THE TIGHT LINE IS REMORSELESS! STEADILY, HE IS REELED IN...



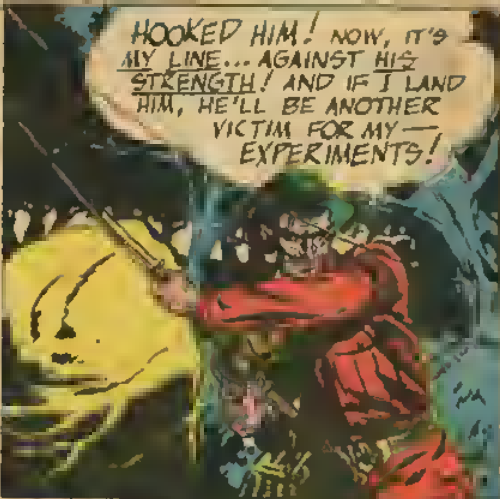
NO! NO!

NOW TO GAFF HIM!

A MAN SCREAMS IN SUDDEN PANIC AS HE THRESHES THE COLD WATERS OF LAKE OTTER, IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND...



CAN'T SWIM FAST ENOUGH... HE'LL HOOK ME... DRAG ME BACK...!



HOOKED HIM! NOW, IT'S MY LINE... AGAINST HIS STRENGTH! AND IF I LAND HIM, HE'LL BE ANOTHER VICTIM FOR MY EXPERIMENTS!



ONE MORE MAN—WHO IS SOON TO BECOME A FISH!

MANHUNT

SOME DAYS LATER, IN HIS OFFICE AT NEW SCOTLAND YARD, INSPECTOR RONALD KIRK IS INTERRUPTED...



WHILE THE NORTHBOUND EXPRESS HURTLES ALONG THE GLEAMING RAILS, QUEER LIGHTS FLICKER ON AND OFF IN A LONELY MANSION AND THE ENGLISH HILLS...



THE MOON RISES HIGH INTO THE NIGHT SKY AS JASON REEL HIDES IN THE SHADOWS AND PEERS OUT...

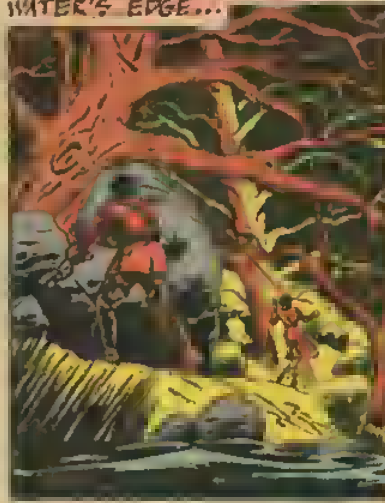


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THE FISHER-
MAN!...
AFTER
ME!

REEL SLAMS A STONE OFF
HER HEAD AS SHE NEARS THE
WATER'S EDGE...

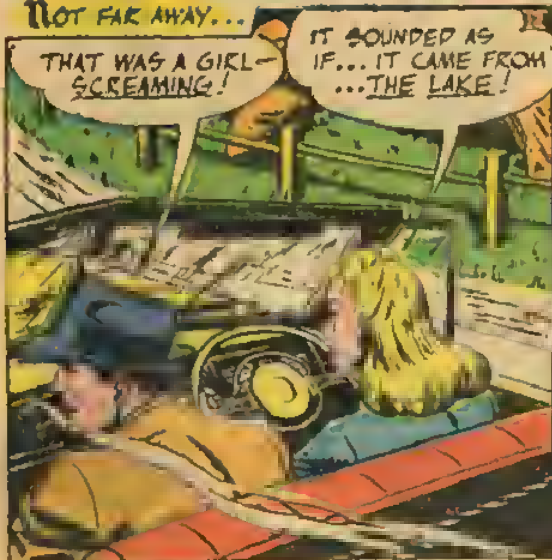


A SCREAM THROBBING IN
HER THROAT, THE TERRIFIED
GIRL PLUNGES INTO THE COLD
LAKE WATER.....



SWIM, MY
BEAUTY!
SWIM... SWIM!
... FOR YOUR
VERY LIFE!

NOT FAR AWAY...



THAT WAS A GIRL-
SCREAMING!

IT SOUNDED AS
IF... IT CAME FROM
...THE LAKE!



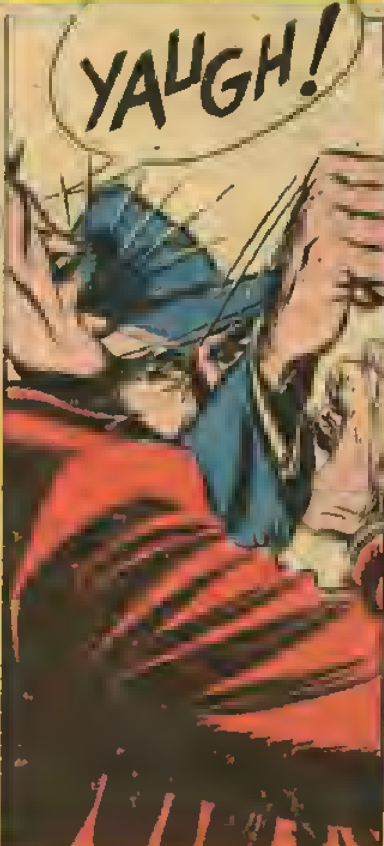
YOU STAY IN THE
CAR! ... I'LL SEE
WHAT'S
UP!

BE CAREFUL!

MANHUNT



STAGGERING BACKWARD FROM KIRK'S TERRIFIC PUNCH, REEL PULLS A SHIV.....



BUT, AS KIRK MOVES IN TO FINISH HIS MAN, HE TRIPS!

MANHUNT

AS KIRK STUMBLES HE GIVES REEL JUST TIME ENOUGH TO BLUDGEON HIM INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS...

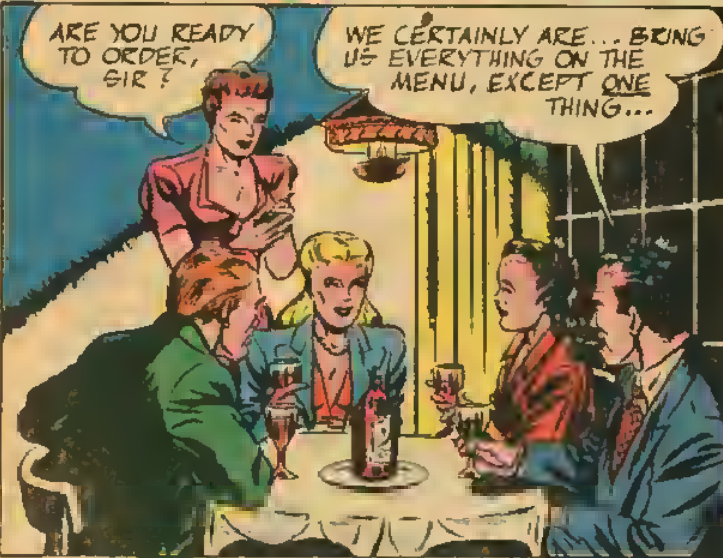


MANHUNT

AS KIRK'S SHOULDERS TOUCH THE FLOOR, HE LASHES OUT WITH HIS FOOT — A HAYMAKER!!



SOME HOURS LATER, THAT SAME NIGHT...



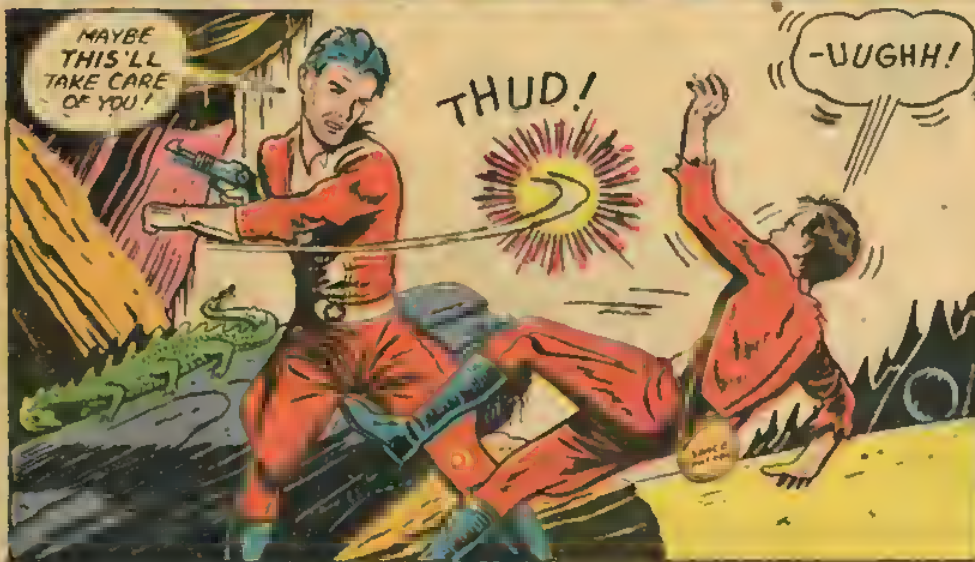
SPACE AGE



A LONG THE HOT AND FIERY SANDS OF PROXIMA CENTAURI'S FIRST PLANET, JET BLACK AND JAK TAL STAGGER WEAKLY, WITH HALF A CANTEEN OF WATER, WITHOUT FOOD, WITH SPACE PIRATES ON THEIR TRAIL, THEY FACE GRIM DEATH AND THEN REASON SEEMS TO TAKE THEM TO...

THE ADVENTURE OF THE INVISIBLE PIRATES!!

-FRED GUARDINEER



THE HEAT OF THE CENTAURI DESERTS IS STIFLING AND MADDENING! BUT IS IT ENOUGH TO SNAP MEN'S BRAINS? JET BLACK AND JAK TAL-POVERS OF THE SPACEWAYS, STARS OF THE PATROL-- FIGHTING? CAN THE MAN AND ADVENTURERS HAVE TURNED UPON EACH OTHER?



MANHUNT

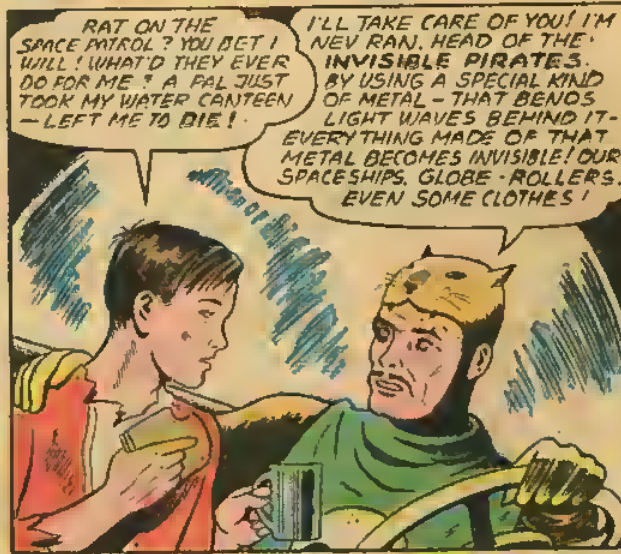
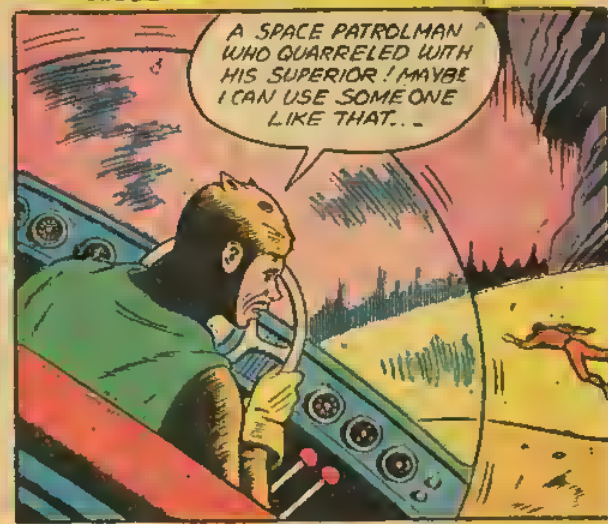
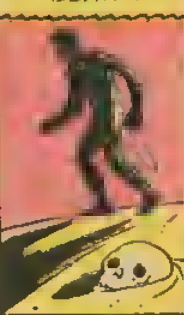
MINUTES TICK BY AND THEN A MYSTERIOUS INVISIBLE GLOBE APPROACHES JAK TAL...

I'LL TAKE THE WATER! IF ONE OF US HAS TO DIE... YOU CAN BE THE ONE!

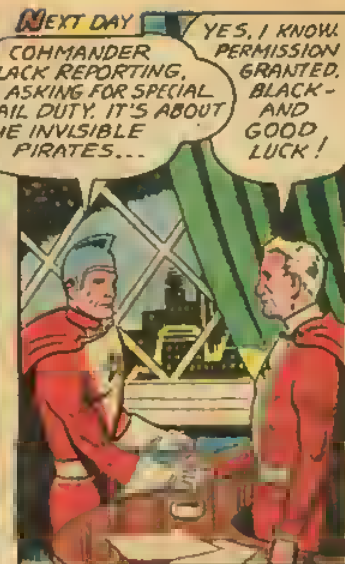
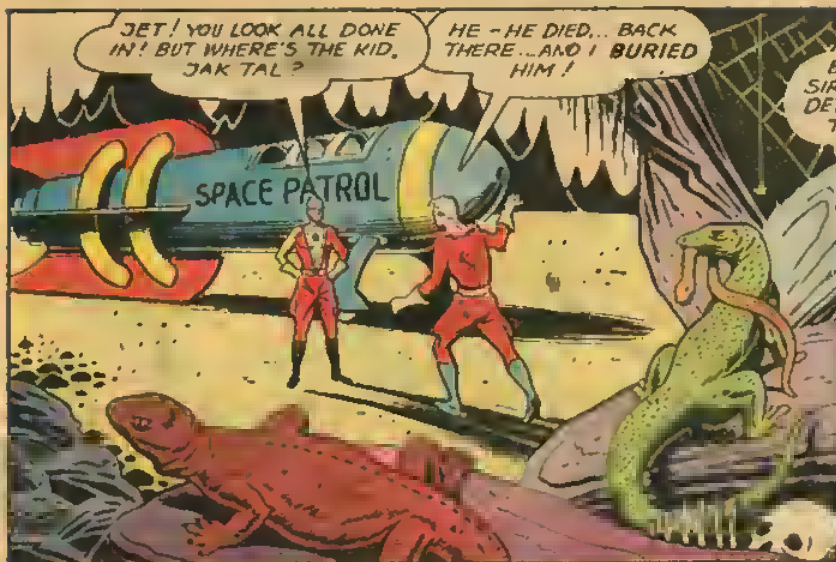
THAT SUITS ME FINE! I WOULDN'T WANT TO LIVE - WITH YOU!



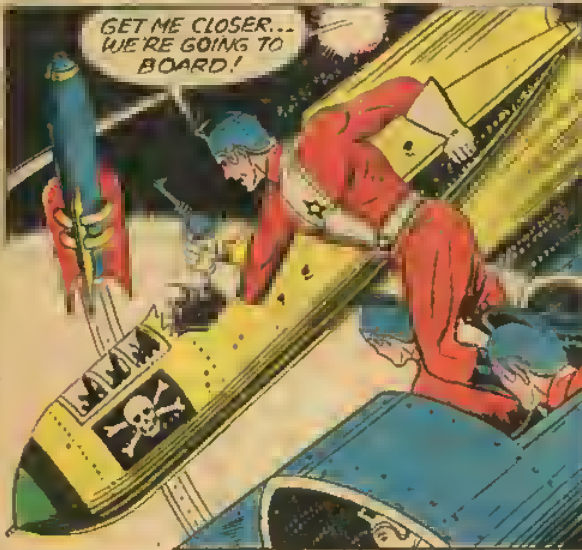
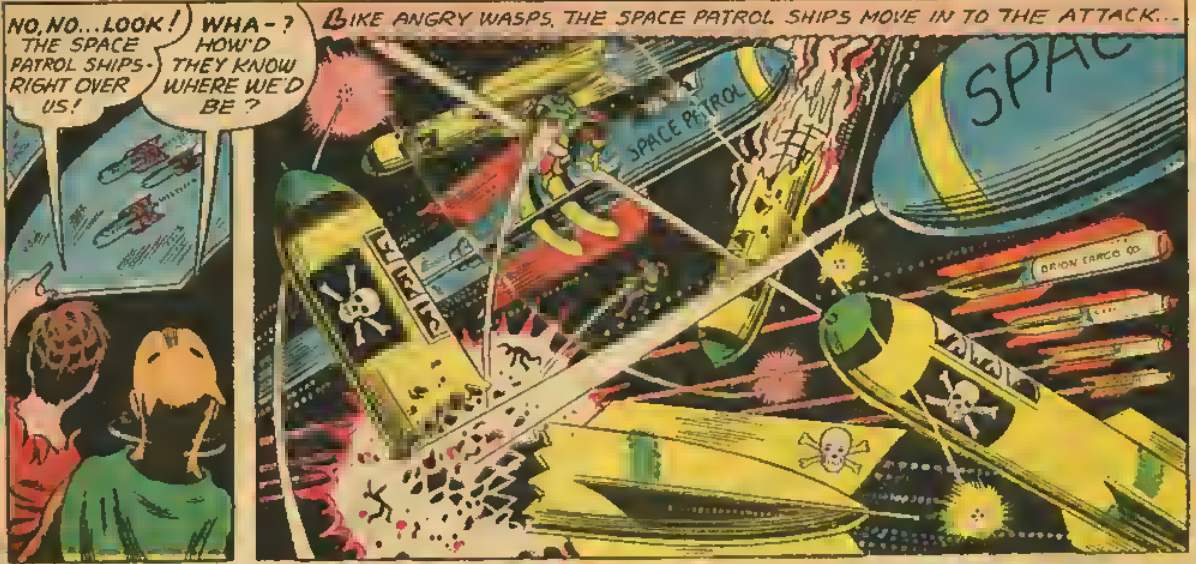
ALONE AND WEARY, BARELY ABLE TO MOVE HIS LEGS, SPACE ACE STAGGERS OFF ACROSS THE SANDS, DESERTING HIS YOUNG COMRADE, LEAVING HIM TO FACE SURE DEATH!



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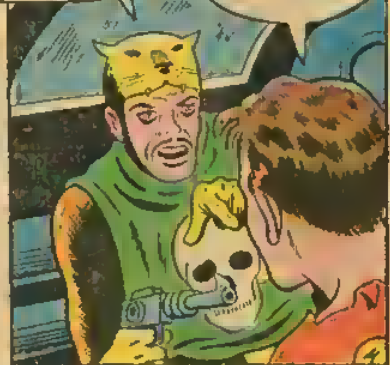
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AHEAD OF THE FLEEING PIRATE FORMATION, NEV RAN FACES JAK TAL...

MY SHIPS- SMASHED! MY MEN- SLAUGHTERED! THE PATROL WAS TIPPED OFF THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HAVE DONE IT IS- YOU!

WHY SHOULD I DO THAT? YOU SAW HOW JET BLACK DESERTED ME!



MANHUNT



MANHUNT



THE END

FALLON OF THE F.B.I.

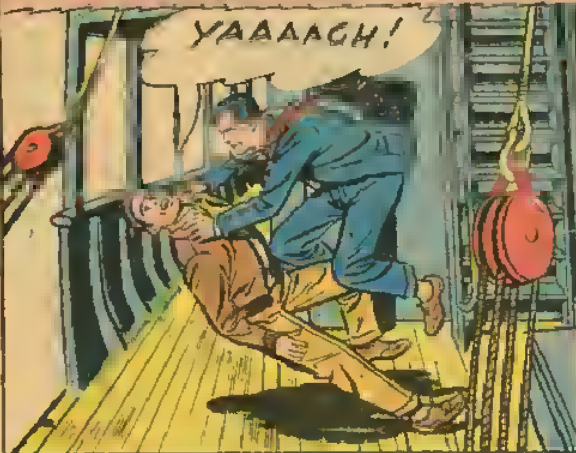


THE LIFELINE OF A NATION LIKE THE UNITED STATES IS ITS GREAT MARITIME INDUSTRY --- SHIPS TO CARRY ITS GOODS AND PRODUCE TO THE PORTS OF THE WORLD AND TO BRING BACK VITAL IMPORTS. WHEN ENEMY AGENTS TIE UP THOSE SHIPS BY STRIKES --- IT IS UNDECLARED WAR. AGAINST THE BURROWING RATS OF RED COMMUNISM THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION STANDS LIKE A RAMPART AS JIM FALLON FIGHTS ---

"THE ENEMY WITHIN!"

A DARK BODY HURTTLES DOWNWARD. A FRIGHTENED SCREAM RIPS FROM A CORDED THROAT

YAAAACH!



IT TOOK A LONG TIME - BUT TONIGHT I CAUGHT UP WITH YOU, FALKIRK!

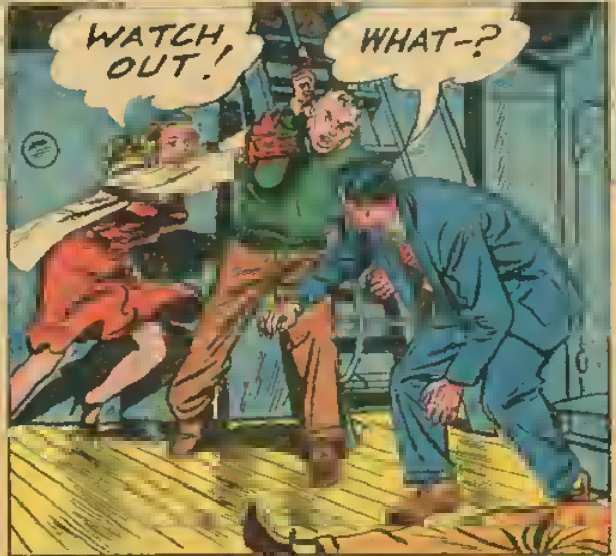


WHEW! THIS IS LIKE STARING INTO A MIRROR! HE LOOKS -- JUST LIKE ME!

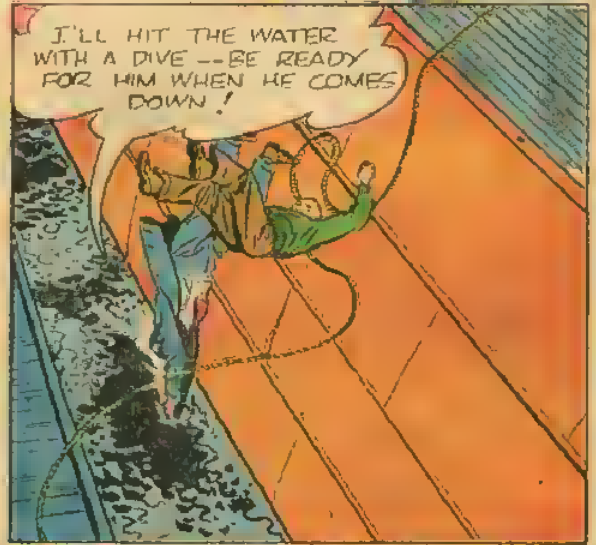
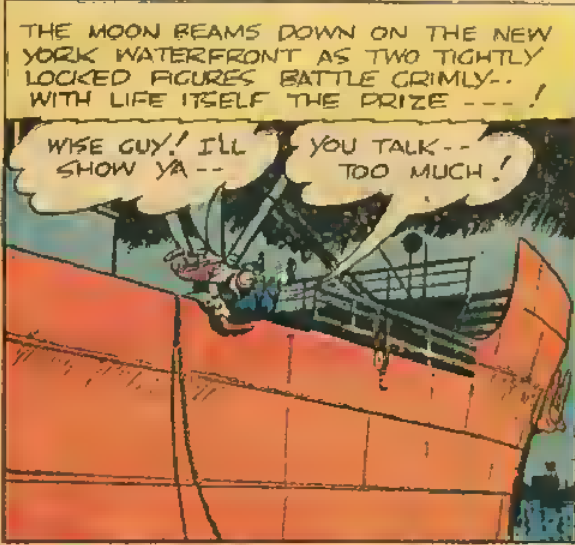


WATCH OUT!

WHAT-?



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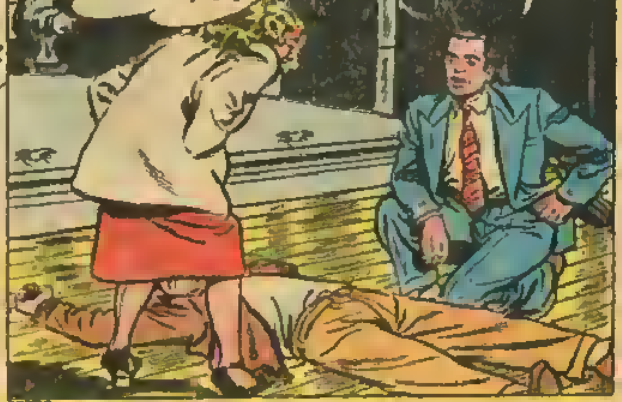


IT'S THE OLD HITLERIAN IDEA OF INFILTRATION, SPLIT THE OTHER GUYS, AND TAKE OVER. THE REDS, ALTHOUGH A MINORITY, REALLY SEEK TO DOMINATE OUR COUNTRY'S SHIPPING BY CONTROL OF THE MARITIME UNIONS. THEY CAN CALL A STRIKE, CAUSE OUR MEN TO LOSE PAY, MAKE OUR SHIPS LIE IN HARBOR WHILE FOREIGN BOATS GET THE TRADE --



IF THEY HAVE SO MUCH POWER NOW -- WHAT WOULD THEY BE ABLE TO DO IN CASE OF -- WAR ???

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



I'LL GET HIM OUT OF HERE. YOU'D BETTER GET A MOVE ON, MIGHT NOT BE HEALTHY FOR YOU TO MIX IN STUFF LIKE THIS!

I WANT NEWS. I'VE A HUNCH YOU AND I WILL MEET AGAIN -- SOMEWHERE!



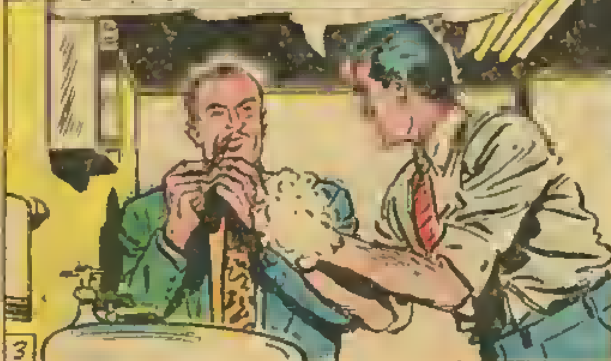
LATER, IN THE F.B.I. FIELD OFFICE...

HERE HE IS, BOYS, NED FALKICK, A PROVEN RED. WANTED FOR ROBBERY AND BLACKMAIL. TRYING TO BUST OPEN LOCAL UNION O-354 SO THE COMMIES WILL CONTROL IT.

GESTAPO!



HAD MY EYES ON HIM A LONG TIME. CAUGHT UP WITH HIM TONIGHT. NOW HERE'S MY IDEA -- I TAKE HIS PLACE! I LOOK A LOT LIKE HIM. I'LL GET INTO THE RED ORGANIZATION, TRY TO SMASH THIS ATTEMPT TO GET CONTROL OF LOCAL O-354!



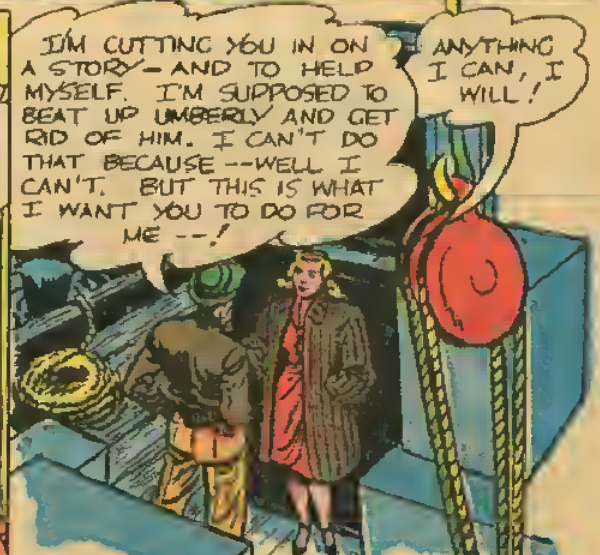
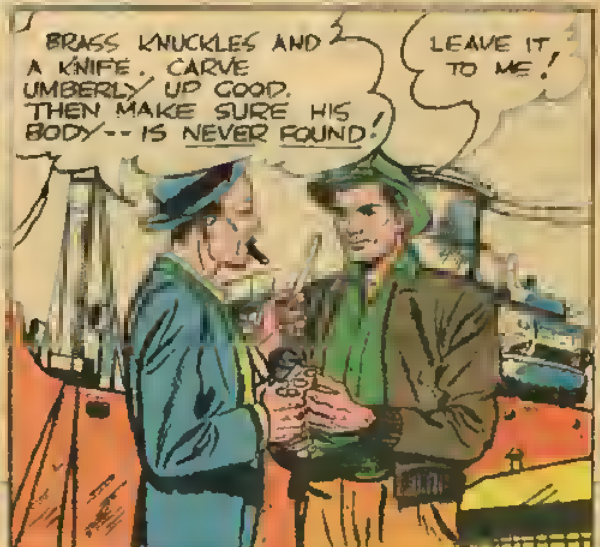
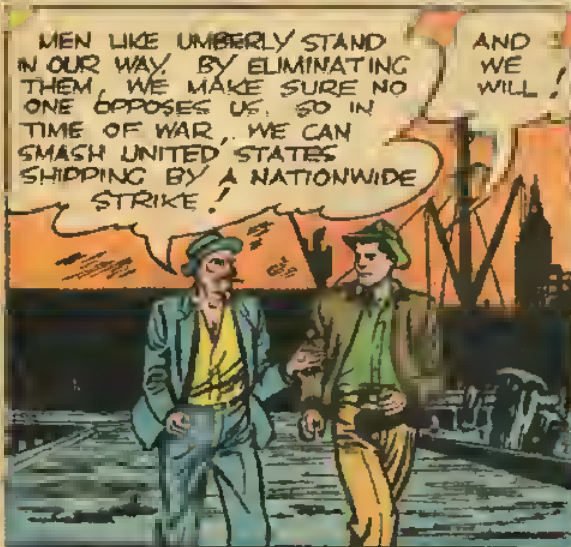
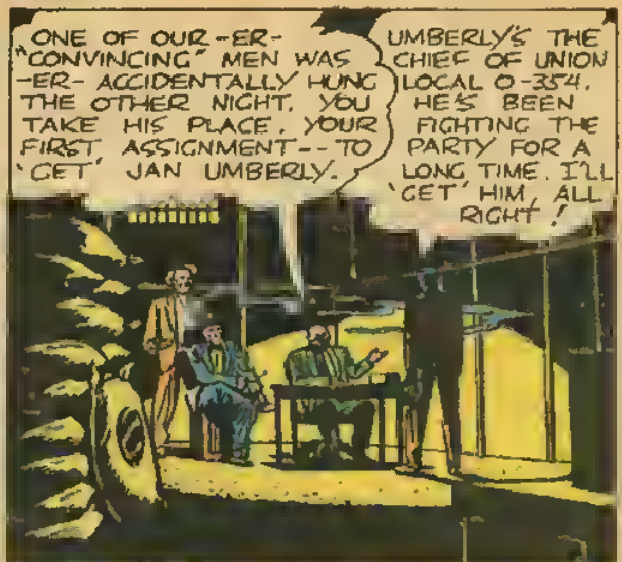
SOME NIGHTS LATER --

I DETEST MELODRAMA, BUT IT'S BETTER THAN NOT EVEN MY CLOSEST HELPERS KNOW MY IDENTITY --

A NEW RECRUIT MASQUE!



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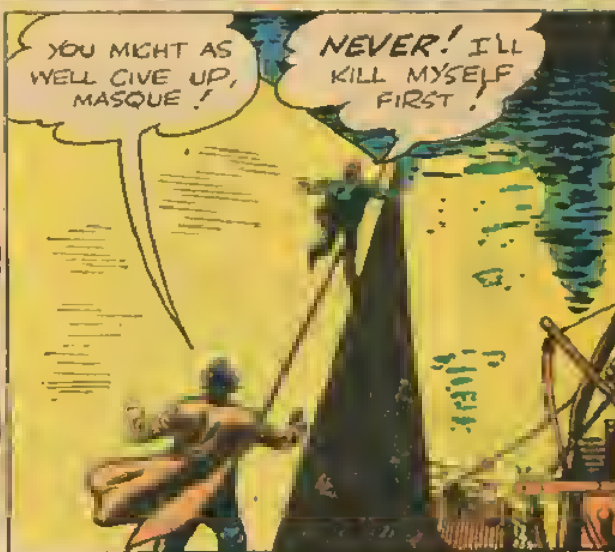


A FOGHORN BOOMS DULLY ACROSS THE MOONLIT WATERS OF THE HARBOR. FEET BEAT HOLLOWLY AGAINST THE SODDEN PLANKING OF A WHARF...

HERE COMES UMBERLY NOW WALKING HOME FROM A UNION MEETING!

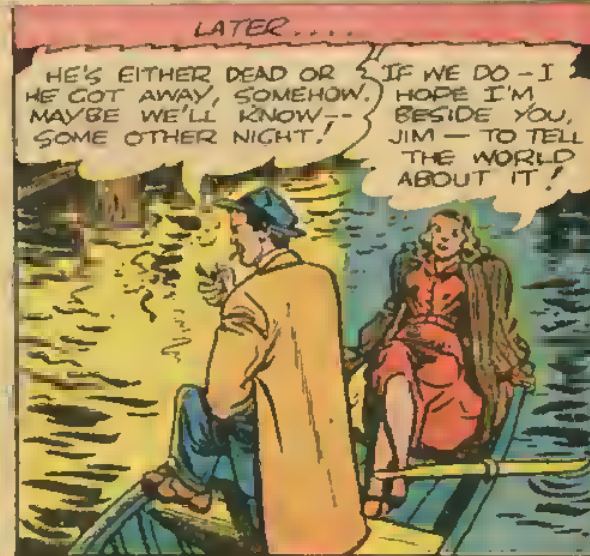


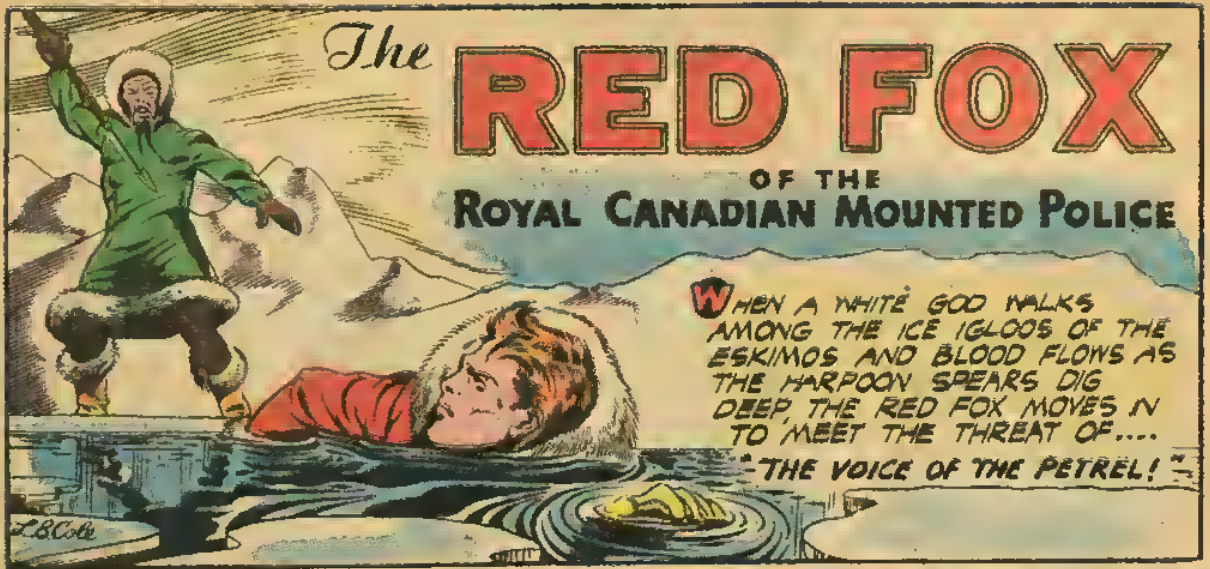
MANHUNT



SECONDS LATER A BODY PLUNGES
DOWNWARD TOWARD THE COLD WATERS
OF THE HARBOR. FALLON WATCHES
WITH KEEN EYES -- THE MINUTES
PASS

HE DIDN'T COME UP. BUT TO
MAKE SURE, I'LL HAVE THE WATERS
DRAGGED FOR HIS BODY. THE MASQUE
IS ONE **BIG** FOREIGN AGENT WE WANT!





The RED FOX

OF THE
ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

WHEN A WHITE GOD WALKS
AMONG THE ICE IGLOOS OF THE
ESKIMOS AND BLOOD FLOWS AS
THE HARPOON SPEARS DIG
DEEP, THE RED FOX MOVES IN
TO MEET THE THREAT OF....
"THE VOICE OF THE PETREL!"

THE ARCTIC PATROL BOAT OF THE NORTH-
WEST MOUNTED POLICE EDGES SLOWLY
BETWEEN TALL BANKS OF TOWERING
ICEBERGS.....



AN ESKIMO! I DON'T GET IT...THEY'RE
USUALLY SO PEACEFUL!



ACROSS THE SILENT STRETCHES OF THE
ICE FLOES THE RED FOX PURSUES THE
MURDEROUS ESKIMO....

YOU CAN'T
ESCAPE!

WHEN HE COMES TOO NEAR,
I TURN
QUICK!





AND STAB!

OH!



BOXING LESSONS COME IN HANDY FIGHTING A KNIFE-MAN! THEY TEACH YOU TO ROLL YOUR HEAD AWAY FROM TROUBLE....



AND TO GET IN THE FIRST PUNCH!

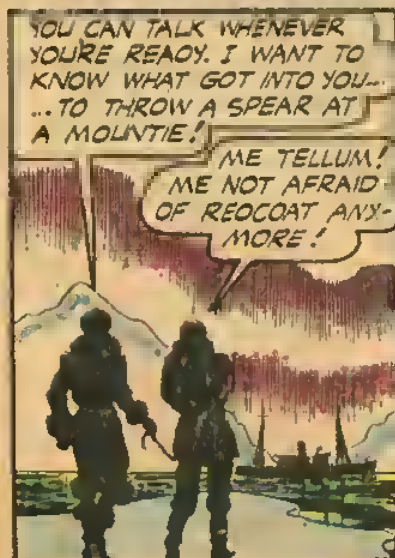
YIII!



A SMASHING FIST DRIVES THE ESKIMO'S FACE SIDWAYS AS OBLIVION CLOSES DOWN OVER THE WOULD-BE KILLER....

A FOLLOW-UP TO FINISH THE JOB!

...GAAAWWK!



YOU CAN TALK WHENEVER YOU'RE READY. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT GOT INTO YOU... TO THROW A SPEAR AT A MOUNTIE!

ME TELLUM! ME NOT AFRAID OF REDCOAT ANY-MORE!

THE GREAT PETREL GET YOU. GET ALL REDCOATS. ESKIMOS BE HEAP BIG POWER IN NORTH. TAKE ALL NORTHLAND FOR OUR OWN. ALL THINGS SPEAK FOR HIM WHEN HE WILLS IT.

THE PETREL? OH, YES. ONE OF THE LOCAL GODS.... SAID TO BE AN AVENGING SPIRIT! AND THINGS SPEAK FOR HIM? HMMM.

IF A VENTRILOQUIST CALLING HIMSELF THE PETREL IS MAKING TROUBLE IN THE ICE COUNTRY, I'M GOING TO TAKE A TRIP INLAND TO CHECK...



MANHUNT

MILES AHEAD OF THE ARCTIC PATROL BOAT...

IT WAS LUCKY FOR ME WHEN I TOOK UP VENTRILOQUISM. THESE IGNORANT SAVAGES THINK I'M THE PETREL.... A GOD!



AND I WAS JUST AS LUCKY THE DAY I CAME TO THE NORTH!

THERE'S GOLD UP HERE. NO REASON WHY I CAN'T CUT MYSELF IN ON IT!



ESPECIALLY WHEN I MET NANO-LAK, THE ESKIMO....

THIS NANO-LAK'S LAND. YOU NOT HUNT OR FISH HERE!



WHY.... I WOULDN'T HURT THAT MAN!

MY FISHING SPEAR. IT SPOKE TO ME!

OF COURSE I SPOKE. ALL THINGS SPEAK IN THE PRESENCE OF THIS GREAT ONE!



YOU ARE THE PETREL, THE GREAT ONE! FORGIVE ME, OH MASTER! I DID NOT KNOW. ALL THIS LAND IS YOURS. I AM YOURS....

TAKE ME TO YOUR PEOPLE!



AS HE CEASES TO REMINISCE AND TILTS THE BOX, A FLOW OF GOLDEN NUGGETS POURS INTO MARTIN GANDER'S OUTSTRETCHED PALM....

NOW I HAVE 'EM BRINGING ME ALL THE GOLD THERE IS AROUND THESE PARTS!



I'VE MADE 'EM GO OUT AND KILL AND ROB FOR ME. I HAVE A SECRET CACHE OF FURS TO GO WITH MY GOLD. PRETTY SOON I'LL BE RICH ENOUGH TO GO BACK TO THE SOUTH... AND CIVILIZATION!



MANHUNT

AGED SLED-RUNNERS SLIDING EASILY ACROSS THE SNOW, THE SCARLET RIDER OF THE SNOWS SWINGS DOWN INTO ESKIMO COUNTRY.

I OUGHT TO BE MEETING SOME OF THEM PRETTY SOON.



A MOUNTIE! OH-OH! THAT'S NOT SO GOOD. IF HE STARTS ASKING QUESTIONS OF THE ESKIMOS, HE'LL KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING...



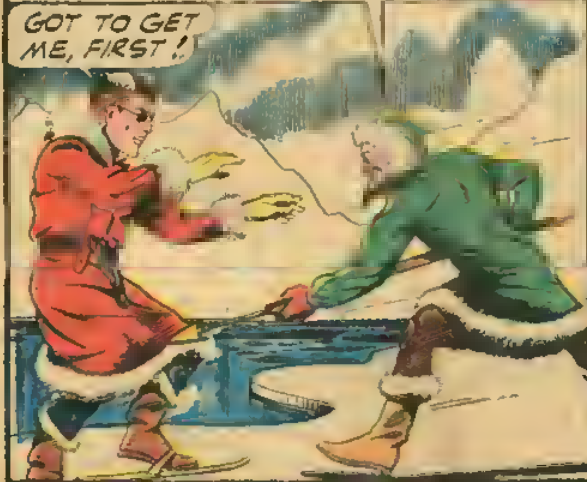
LIKE A DART OF LIGHTNING, A HARPOON SPEAR FLASHES IN THE ARCTIC SUNLIGHT....

WHOOOF! THAT WAS CLOSE!



BLASTED REDCOAT! I'LL CUT YOU TO RIBBONS AND FEED YOU TO THE SEALS!

GOT TO GET ME, FIRST!

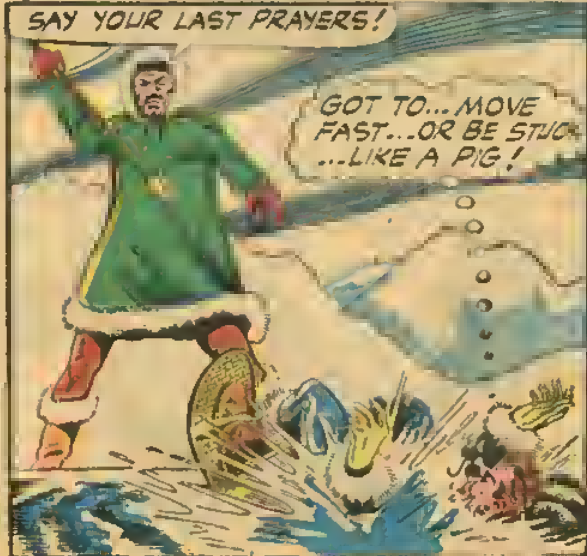


I'LL DO THAT... BY CUTTING YOUR FEET OUT FROM UNDER YOU!



SAY YOUR LAST PRAYERS!

GOT TO... MOVE FAST... OR BE STUCK... LIKE A PIG!

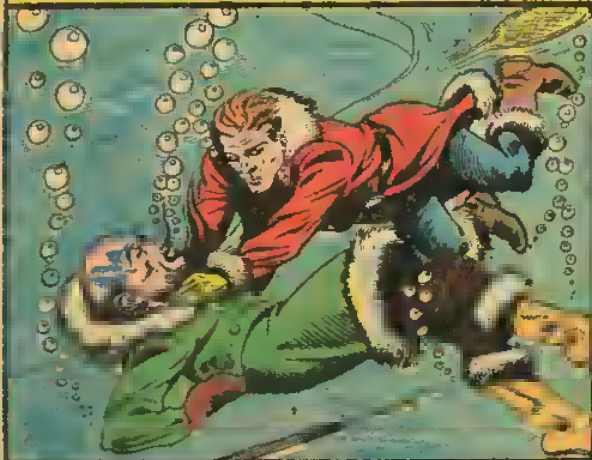


WITH ONE HAND ON THE EDGE OF THE ICE FLOE, RED FOX FLASHES HIS OTHER HAND FORWARD AND CLOSSES IT DOWN ON THE VENTRILOQUIST'S LEG....

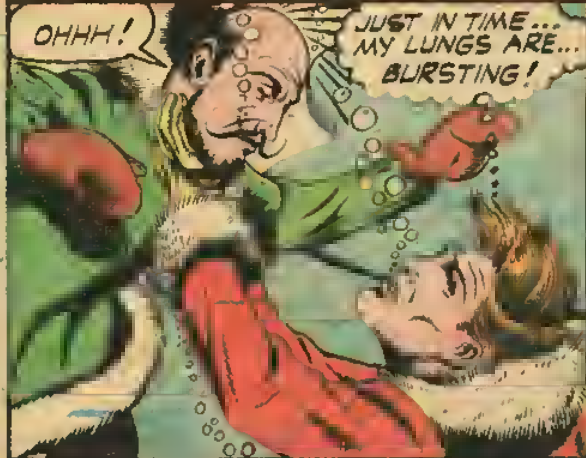
COME ON IN... THE WATER'S FINE!



THRASHING, CHURNING THE BUBBLING WATER TO A ROIL, THE RED FOX AND THE FALSE PETREL BATTLE TO THE DEATH...



UNTIL THE SCARLET RIDER OF THE SNOWS BATTERS HIS OPPONENT'S HEAD AGAINST AN OUTCROPPING OF SOLID ICE....



I'LL FIND OUT WHAT COOKS WITH THIS FELLA, AT THAT VILLAGE ... !



GRAB HIM! TIE HIM UP! HE HAS DARED... WITH EVIL MAGIC ... TO CAUSE THE PETREL TO BE BOUND!

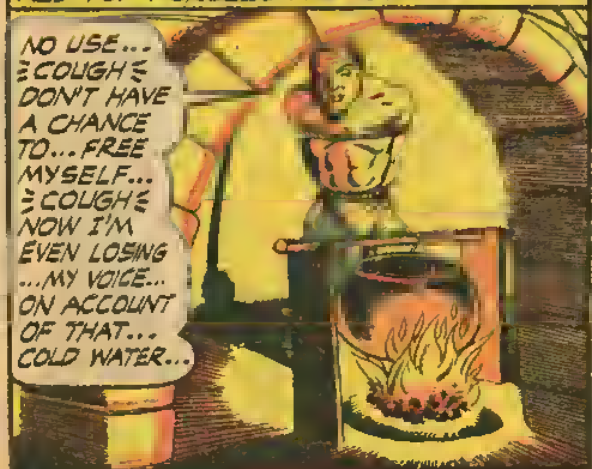


WHAT...? SO MOUNTIE SURRENDER! THAT'S HIS ... OR WE KILL!

YOU'LL MAKE A NICE SACRIFICE, MOUNTIE! TOMORROW... YOU GET BURNED AT THE STAKE ... IN MY HONOR!



ALL THAT NIGHT, ALONE AND CHILLED FROM THE ICY WATERS OF THE ARCTIC SEA, THE RED FOX FORSEES HIS DOOM....



AND THE NEXT DAY... EVERYTHING'S SET! TOO BAD I DON'T HAVE A SPIRIT OR A GOD TO THROW A VOICE FOR ME... SAY! MAYBE... MAYBE... IT MIGHT WORK, AT THAT !!



MANHUNT

AS MARTIN GANDER APPROACHES, THE BOUND AND TIED RED FOX MOCKS AND TAUNTS HIM, YET EVEN UNDER HIS SHARPEST SNEERS, THE PETREL REMAINS SILENT!

HELLO, THERE, VENTRILOQUIST. TOO BAD YOU'RE GOING BACK TO JAIL WITH ME. BUT THEN, A STUPID CROOK LIKE YOU ALWAYS MAKES SOME SORT OF A MISTAKE!



HO, PEOPLE OF THE ESKIMO! YOUR PETREL HAS LOST HIS POWER. HE IS GOD NO LONGER. ASK HIM IF THE THINGS AROUND WILL TALK FOR HIM. ASK HIM ASK HIM!



YOU HAVE LARYNGITIS! SAME AS I HAVE! YOURS IS WORSE, THOUGH.... YOU CAN'T TALK AT ALL --- AND THEREFORE YOU CAN'T THROW YOUR VOICE IN VENTRILOQUISM!



RED FOX SPEAKS TRUE WORDS. NOTHING SPEAKS FOR THE PETREL! YOU TAKE HIM WITH YOU, RED FOX --- AND WE WILL PAY FOR THE EVIL DEEDS WE HAVE DONE!



SOME DAYS LATER, IN SIGHT OF FORT SIMPSON....

AS OUR MOTTO READS, ... A MOUNTIE ALWAYS GETS HIS MAN! YEAH, YOU GOT ME, I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND WHY I GOT LARYNGITIS SO BAD AND YOU DIDN'T.



OH, THAT WAS EASY WHILE WE FOUGHT UNDER WATER, I WAS STEADILY AIMING AT ... AND CHOKING YOU ON ... YOUR ADAM'S APPLE! A FEW APPLICATIONS OF FINGERS AND FIST AND YOU COULDN'T HAVE TALKED ANYHOW...EVEN IF YOU HADN'T BEEN IN ICY WATER!



WHAT'S THE MATTER CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?

BAHHH!



The End

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"Got to . . . get away . . . from him. Can't do it . . . just by running. That devil in back of me has the constitution of an ox. He's a trained killer. Ming Tei wouldn't send an amateur. He's probably one of the best. . ."

He listened. Only the sighing of the night wind rattling the rigging of a doeked fishing smack answered his straining ears. Water lapped against a piling. A foghorn boomed, *thooooon-thooooon*, somewhere out on the water.

Feet!

He could hear them coming down the alley. Loud, noisy feet. Not — bare feet!

"You!" bellowed a voice. "Hey, you! I see you. Answer me, can't you?"

Light blinded him, etched him in brightness with his back against the wall. A flashlight, in the hands of — a policeman!

Evan Hardin giggled in hysterical relief. He panted, "Don't mind me, officer. I'm just . . . a little sick, that's all."

The bluecoated patrolman came forward suspiciously, his nightstick in his hand. He lowered the light, but its indirect beam still showed Evan Hardin to him clearly. The policeman was searching him with his keen eyes.

"You do look done in," the officer said kindly. "Why not walk along with me? Maybe the fresh salt air will snap you out of it."

"A good idea, officer. A swell, wonderful idea."

Rubbing his cheek, the officer looked at Hardin quizzically. He murmured, "If it's pulling my leg you are —"

"No, officer, I mean it. In case I had another attack of sickness, you know, you'd be there. . ."

Mollified, the bluecoat smiled and moved on. He put his feet down solidly, protectively. Evan Hardin smiled to himself. The killer wouldn't have a chance to get him now. He'd walk the rounds with the cop, let the cop see him into a taxi. He'd press a sawbuck into the driver's hand and tell him to hit the bright lights on his way home. The Black Cult killer wouldn't dare strike at him where he would be seen, and cornered.

Side by side, the policeman and the explorer walked along the warehouse sidewalks. They passed under street lamps, moved along cobblestone streets.

Twice Hardin looked back, and saw no one.

A third time he glanced back —

A half-naked man was padding into dark shadows. On his head he wore a turban. In his hand was a glittering knife, the knife of KuFan. Hardin saw the man grin, saw the white and even teeth in the swart face; even as the man, knowing Hardin was watching, ran a blunt fingertip down the keen edge of the knife-blade that was sharp as the finest razor made.

"Huh? Whazzat?" asked the cop.

Hardin realized he had made choking sounds low in his throat. An idea occurred to him. He caught at the bluecoat's arm and whispered, "Someone — following us . . . over there in the shadows!"

"He is, is he?" growled the patrolman. "One of those skulkin' crooks who's waitin' until I make my rounds, an' then he'll slip into a warehouse an' loot to his heart's content. Well, he won't!"

The officer pulled his service revolver. He ran into the shadows. He hunted where the turbaned man should be — and was not. The policeman came back scowling.

"Nobody there. I looked all over. You must be gettin' an attack again. Let's move on an' finish my rounds, then I'll see you safely to a cab."

Evan Hardin sighed with relief. He said, "That's fine."

They went together for three blocks, then the policeman turned right and moved out onto a wharf where there was nothing but pale moonlight. The cop whistled cheerfully and swung his nightstick. His happiness and contentedness communicated themselves to Hardin. He felt cheery, laughed at his worries. Why, tomorrow morning, this would be like a bad dream!

A motorboat chugged out on the water, heading toward the wharf. A flashlight waved, signalling.

The cop said, "A patrol boat. Harbor patrol. Hello, out there!"

"Who's there? Kelly?"

"Kelly it is."

"Come aboard, Jim. The commissioner sent word to get you down to his office to identify a man. We'll pick you up, take you in. . ."

Even Hardin whispered, "No! . . . no! . . . don't leave me!"

Kelly was cheerful. "Sure, you'll be all right. I'd take you with me, only orders is orders, you know."

Hardin watched the boat pull in, watched Kelly jump aboard. Fascinated, he saw the boat leave bubbles in its wake as it chugged away from the wharf. Standing there, he sweated. He had to go back the whole length of the wharf . . . go back to that man . . . alone and unprotected.

He started to run. His feet made slapping sounds. His breath sobbed in his throat. His forehead beaded with sweat. He ran the length of the wharf, raced onto the sidewharf that led to the street.

He was still running as the man in the turban stepped out of the shadows and threw the knife.

The blade made a soft sound going into Hardin's back, up to the hilt. He crumpled and fell, and rolled over twice.

When he stopped rolling, he was dead.

THE END

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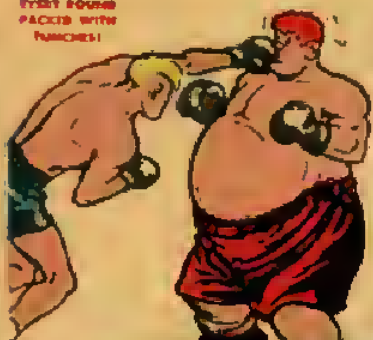
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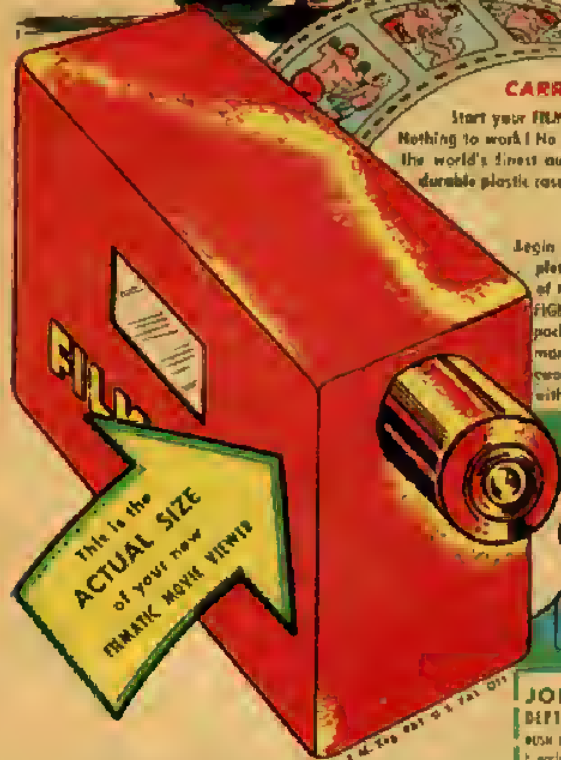
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